

Call for Expressions of Interest

Surveys on economic policy issues

COEURE project

Summary: The COEURE Coordination Action, funded by the European Commission's FP7 SSH Programme, aims at evaluating European research in economics from the perspective of its contribution to key EU economic policy issues. In order to achieve this objective, the COEURE Coordination Action is seeking to involve European or non-European scholars to write surveys on the research underpinnings of European economic policy.

This Call for Expressions of Interest concerns the implementation of these surveys. It explains the objectives and process by which COEURE's Executive Committee will select the scholars (the Principal Investigators or PIs) in charge of the surveys.

Deadline for applications: 30 September 2014

Contact: Eunata Mayor, Scientific Communication Policy Adviser of the COEURE project. Email: eunate.mayor@tse-fr.eu

Context and overall objectives of the COEURE project

The European Union is the world's largest economic entity. However, its ability to design and implement effective economic policies promoting productivity, growth, research and innovation has not proved commensurate to its size. In addition, European research remains fragmented across Member States and Europe lags behind the U.S. in terms of research productivity.

In this context, the **COEURE Coordination Action** (which stands for COoperation for EUropean Research in Economics) will bring together the key stakeholders in the European economic research space – funders, policy-makers and researchers – in a process of stocktaking, consultation and stakeholder collaboration. The aim of this process is to inform the EU agenda for research funding in economics under Horizon 2020 about current research challenges and knowledge gaps on key EU economic policy issues.

The Action is funded by the European Commission and brings together, under the initiative of the European Economic Association, six partner universities (European University Institute, Bocconi University, Central European University, Dortmund University, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Toulouse School of Economics and Université Libre de Bruxelles) and the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR).

COEURE consists of three work packages. The first work package (“Advances in Economic Research: Foundations for European Policies”) will map the research frontier in key economic areas, assess the European contribution to that frontier and its potential to address key EU economic policy issues. The second work package (“Evaluation Mechanisms for Funding Economic Research in Europe”) will assess the performance of economic research funding sources and mechanisms across EU member states. The third work package (“Setting an Agenda for Research Funding for Economics in Europe”) will bring together the stakeholders of economic research (funders, policy-makers and researchers) and combine the results from the first two work packages to set out an agenda to strengthen economic research in Europe, its funding and its contribution to EU economic policies.

Further information about the project can be found on COEURE’s website: www.coeure.eu.

Objectives and content of surveys

In view of European economic policy challenges, eleven topics have been selected to address the objectives of the first work package, namely:¹

1. Population, migration, aging and health
2. Inequality and Welfare
3. Human capital and education
4. Labour Markets
5. R&D, innovation and growth

¹ Table 1 in the Appendix depicts the relationship between the policy issues at the forefront of the European Union agenda, the surveys’ research areas proposed by COEURE and the economic subfields that might provide the tools, recommendations and/or solutions to such policy issues.

6. Competition and regulation in markets for goods and services
7. Financial markets
8. Energy, environment and sustainability
9. Fiscal and monetary policy
10. Cities, regional development and transport
11. Trade, globalization and development

In addition, there is a twelfth topic, “data and methods”, which cuts across areas and policy issues and covers current developments in data and research methods in economics.

For each selected topic, COEURE partners will solicit a survey and organize a workshop that will bring together key researchers who have contributed to the topic, as well as leading European policy-makers. The workshops will serve as forums to discuss recent advances in our understanding of policy issues, open questions, developments in methods and challenges facing research on the given topic.

The main objective of the surveys is to identify the key research challenges pertaining to one broad area of policy and demonstrate how economic research can contribute to the policy issues related to such area. Its originality lies in synthesizing insights from different fields of economics, rather than summarizing the results from the literature in a single field, as it is often the case with surveys of the academic literature.

The survey should address the following points:

1. Why is the topic important, both in general and in the European economic policy context?
2. How can economics contribute to our understanding and analysis of this political and societal topic? (A comparison with potential contributions from other relevant social sciences may be useful, as well as areas of synergies with these other disciplines).
3. What are the key questions (both novel and long-standing) in the area? What do and what don't we know about them? Do we need to better understand the facts or to develop better theories?
4. What are the key points of agreement and disagreement in the academic literature on the subject? Where is the research frontier?
5. What are the key open questions, that is to say, new questions or old questions which have not been addressed in economic research but are of vital importance for policy making?
6. Where does Europe stand in terms of research and expertise in this area compared to other contributors to research, in particular the U.S.?
7. What is the role of scientific advice in EU policy decision-making (see for example the European Commission's 2001 White Paper on European governance)? How does it compare to U.S. economic policy-making governance?
8. What is the research methodology currently used to address questions in this area?
9. What specific challenges do Europe-based researchers working in this area face (including data access, availability or quality, methods, funding and any other relevant issue)?

The process of writing the survey and the design and content of the workshop on the topic are expected to complement each other. Specifically, the *Principal Investigator (PI) in charge of the survey* will be able to rely on the stocktaking exercise that will be carried out before the workshop by the COEURE node in charge of the topic (this exercise will provide data to partially answer questions

6, 7 and 8 above) as well as on additional research assistance if needed, for example to identify policy challenges related to the topic that are specific to Europe. Likewise, preliminary work on the survey is expected to inform the design of the workshop programme. Finally, key points arising from the workshop discussions should be reflected in the survey.

To ensure the greatest possible impact on the research community, the surveys are expected to be published through a scientific outlet, in addition to being part of the COEURE report to the European Commission. Suggestions by the PI of appropriate, high quality publications are welcome.

Deliverables

The main task of the selected PI is to prepare a survey that takes stock of the current understanding of the set of policy issues relevant to the chosen topic, and the remaining open questions and research challenges.

The survey should be approximately 26,000 words long, i.e., approximately 40 pages (with additional appendices if needed). It should be written in English and be accessible to both academic and policy audiences.

A first draft of the survey is due for review by the COEURE Executive Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee in March 2015. The final version will be due in October 2015.

Each PI is also expected to work with the COEURE node in charge of their topic to maximize synergies between the survey and the workshop. More specifically, the PI:

- will be consulted on the design of the workshop programme,
- is expected to participate to the COEURE workshop organized on the topic,
- is expected to integrate the insights and lessons from the workshop into his/her survey.²

Expressions of Interest

A survey may be carried out by one or more PIs. In the case of multiple PIs, the expression of interest must clearly indicate the lead PI (who will be responsible for the deliverables), and should clearly indicate the respective roles of all PIs.

To express interest, the principal investigator (or the lead principal investigator in case of a group of scholars) must provide:

- the topic (among those listed above) for which the PI is proposing to contribute a survey,
- a CV (the CV of the lead PI in case of a group of scholars),
- a preliminary description of proposed structure of the survey including an indication of the fields, approaches and methods that will be covered in the survey and a justification for this choice,

² The exact ways in which this is done is left for the PI and the COEURE node to decide. This could take the form of invited comments on the survey, for example.

- an indication of extra research assistance that the PI may need,
- a commitment to deliver the survey according to the schedule set out above.

We expect a reasonable level of flexibility to ensure that it will be possible to find a mutually agreeable date during the autumn of 2014 or the beginning of 2015 for the organization of the workshop. We also welcome suggestions of ways in which the workshop and the survey can be further coordinated to maximize quality, policy relevance and impact.

Applications and inquiries should be sent to Eunata Mayor, Scientific Communication Policy Adviser for the COEURE project by 30 September 2014. Email: eunate.mayor@tse-fr.eu.

Selection process

Applications will be reviewed by the COEURE Executive Committee and selected projects will be approved by the **Scientific Advisory Committee** of COEURE which is **chaired by Gerard Roland (University of California, Berkeley)**. Other members of the Committee are:

- Oriana Bandiera, London School of Economics
- Richard Blundell, University College London
- François Bourguignon, Paris School of Economics,
- Andreu Mas-Colell, Universitat Pompeu Fabra,
- Peter Neary, University of Oxford,
- Marco Pagano, University of Naples Federico II

Selection will be based on:

- the quality of the survey proposal (40%), i.e. survey methodology and coverage with respect to COEURE objectives
- the PI's research track record in the field and experience in applying research insights to relevant policy questions of European interest (40%),
- the quality of the proposed coordination mechanisms between the survey and the workshop as well as the level of commitment to the project (20%).

Selected candidates will be informed not later than 15 November 2014.

Financial terms

There is a 25,000 EUR gross honorarium for each survey. Payment of the honorarium will be made upon approval of the final version of the survey by the Executive Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee of COEURE, no later than 2 months after its submission.

Appendix. Table 1: Correspondence between policy issues, economic subfields and survey topics

Policy issues	Economic subfields	Survey topics #
Economics of research, education and innovation in a European and global context, including economics of smart specialisation (Europe 2020, European Research Agenda)	Industrial organisation, evolutionary economics, labour and education economics, economics of innovation, behavioural and experimental economics	3 5 6
Knowledge-based growth and employment; prioritisation of policies in Europe, in particular, the need for short-term consolidation, long-term growth policies like fiscal consolidation and smart / sustainable growth (i.e. addressing poverty, gender, employment, environment issues, ...)	Macroeconomics, public finance, environmental economics, political economy, evolutionary and development economics	2 4 5 8
The link between monetary and fiscal policy in Europe, and between fiscal and private debts; efficient use of unconventional monetary policies; insolvency problems and the management of rescue funds (addressing asset inflation, housing prices, market bubbles)	Macroeconomics, financial economics, political economy, institutional economics	7 9
Cross-border spill overs, interdependencies and coordination of European policies across borders (addressing the questions of externalities, economies of scale, ...)	Public economics, labour economics, industrial organization, economic geography and international economics	4 6 11
Institutional and structural reforms in the Member States and associated countries concerning issues like ageing, health systems, energy and resources efficiency, transport or environment in the context of Europe 2020 and their budgetary and macroeconomic consequences	Economic history, industrial organization, economic geography, public economics, macroeconomics, transition economics, environmental economics, institutional economics	1 3 8 10